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ABSTRACT

A program of observation of local government bodies was implemented to make 12th grade U.S. government students aware of their local governments and how local government affects them. The program consisted of three components: orientation, implementation, and evaluation. The students were given a slide presentation and an information packet that explained the program and its requirements. The packet also gave a description of the groups the students would be observing and a map that showed the locations of the meetings. The students had 5 weeks in which to complete three observations, not less than one hour each in duration, of three different types of governmental bodies--local legislative bodies, advisory boards, and trial courts. They were given worksheets on which to record pertinent information with spaces for sign-in, sign-out, and an official's signature. As a follow-up, each class discussed what had been observed at the meetings, and a posttest was given to measure how much had been learned, comparing its score with that of a pretest given at the beginning of the program. Students scored an average of 25 percentage points higher on the posttest than on the pretest. Though somewhat apprehensive before the observations, students on the whole reacted favorably to the program. Appendices include documents sent to gather information, the students' packet, the pretest-posttest, and a chart showing the students' reactions to the program. (DB)

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A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT MEANINGFUL OBSERVATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL BODIES BY STUDENTS IN U. S. GOVERNMENT CLASSES

by

ELDON GRAUBERGER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be place in the School Practicum Information Files for reference.

April 1986

SP 030 417

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here will earn similar respect.

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ABSTRACT

A Plan to Implement Meaningful Observation of Local Governmental Bodies by Students in U.S. Government Classes
Grauberger, Eldon, 1986: Practicum Report, Nova University, Center for the Advancement of Education.
Descriptors: Government(Administrative Body)/Local Government/Governing Boards/City Government/Municipal Government/County Officials/Urban Planning/Citizenship Education/ Citizen Role/United States Government(Course)/ Courts/Public Affairs Education/Experiential Learning

The author implemented a program of observation of local governmental bodies in the community with his four classes of twelfth grade U.S. government students. Its aim was to make students aware of their local governments and how they effect them by observing a sample of local governmental bodies in action.

The program consisted of three components: orientation, implementation, and evaluation. The students were given a slide presentation and an information packet that explained the program and its requirements. The packet also gave a description of the bodies the students would be observing and a map that showed the locations of the meetings. The students were given five weeks in which to complete three observations of not less than one hour each of three different types of governmental bodies--local legislative bodies, advisory boards, and trial courts. They were given worksheets on which to record pertinent information with spaces for sign-in, sign-out, and an official's signature.
As a follow-up, each class discussed what had been observed at the meetings, and a posttest was given to measure how much had been learned by comparing its score with that of a pretest that had been given at the beginning of the program.
Students scored an average of 25 percentage points higher on the posttest than on the pretest. Though somewhat apprehensive before the observations, students on the whole reacted favorably to the program.
(Appendices include documents sent to gather information, the student's packet, the worksheets, the pretest-posttest, and a chart showing the students' reaction to the program).

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Dear Observer:

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Practicum Title A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT MEANINGFUL OBSERVATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL BODIES BY STUDENTS IN U.S. GOVERNMENT CLASSES

Student's Name ELDON GRAUBERGER

Program Site LAS VEGAS, NEVADA Date APRIL 23, 1986

Observer's Name SALLY RYCROFT
(please print ----------and sign)

Observer's position SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN-BONANZA HIGH SCHOOL

Observer's comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

Eldon Grauberger followed very carefully the steps outlined in his practicum to increase student awareness of local governmental bodies. Those steps included: a pre-test; introductory information; a slide presentation; student panels; student observations, a post test of student evaluations. Please feel free to contact me for additional information.

Sally Rycroft

A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT MEANINGFUL OBSERVATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL BODIES BY STUDENTS IN U. S. GOVERNMENT CLASSES

PURPOSE

The subject school district is quite large, located in the Southwestern United States, and most of the schools serve an urban metropolitan area. The population is somewhat transient, and many of the people are employed in jobs that do not require a college education. Consequently, higher education is not a high priority with many of the people.

The political and economic climate of the state and the community is basically conservative, and even though total taxes are low compared to both the neighboring states and the nation as a whole, there is a very visable and vocal anti-tax element. As a result, according to a recent study, this state placed last in per capita funding for education.

The subject school is a four year high school located in an area in which there is both considerable affluence and a noticeable lack of it. There is a remarkable contrast in this between some of the finest homes in the city and modest homes and apartments. Although this has not created a social class system among the students that is readily apparent, it does

mean that some of the students find it much easier to attend functions away from the school than others.

Having taught U. S Government for 10 years in the subject school, the writer was aware that many students graduate from high school with only the barest understanding of local governments. This should not be surprising when one observes the adult population. One need only note the vast differences in voter turn-out between national elections and local elections to realize how indifferent people are to their local governments. People, particularly in metropolitan areas, are far more aware of their national leaders than they are of their local officials. Ironically, decisions made by their local governments affect them far more than do decisions coming out of Washington. Many people, in keeping with the current conservative trend, believe that most of the powers of government should be exercised by the states and local governments, and one would, therefore, think that there would be a much greater interest in local governments than there is.

This indifference changes quickly, however, when a person finds that a project he considers to be undesireable is about to be built near his home, his street develops irritating potholes, or his taxes are raised to pay for street improvements or education. In

frustration he discovers his ignorance of the operations of local government.

Most school districts across the country require that students complete a course in either civics or American government before they graduate. Since local governments differ greatly, textbooks and teaching materials cover them in only the most general way. Many teachers of civics or government either encourage or require their students to observe local governmental bodies in action, since they are aware that students learn more from what they experience themselves than what they merely read or hear about.

There are a number of fine organizations that take students from various parts of the country to Washington D. C. to learn about our national government and actually observe some of its functions. This writer participated in two such trips with the Close-Up Foundation as a coordinator accompanying students. It would be difficult to over-estimate the value of such a program. Students learn a remarkable amount in a single week, and in most cases, an interest is sparked that developes into continued study and exploration.

While a visit to city hall obviously can't compare to a trip to the nation's capitol, it is this writer's belief that the more students are exposed to local

governmental functions, the greater will be their interest in and their understanding of local governments.

Teachers with civics and government classes often find themselves frustrated in implementing a program for local government observation. Since students attend from six to eight classes daily, field trips necessarily take them out of other classes and disrupt the school's schedule. Furthermore, the instructor teaches more than a single class, and arrangements must be made to have the other classes covered. Even if they are all government classes, 100 to 200 students are far too many to be supervised by one teacher in such circumstances. In addition,many of the meetings take place in the afternoons and evenings, after the school day is over. Thus, observation by means of field trips is unworkable.

Students abilities vary considerably as well, and a written report, although a rather simple task for a capable student, is overwhelming to a student of less ability. Therefore, a means to allow full participation by students of lower ability was needed.

For the last five or six years, this teacher has required that students observe governmental bodies in action. However, it was evident from students' responses that less was being learned from this than he had hoped. Pre-observation orientation was clearly needed to prepare

students for what they would observe, and a better means of verifying their attendance was necessary, since in some instances, the signatures of officials had been forged on the forms prepared to verify their attendance.

Since it was obvious that many students were attending the meetings only to fulfill the class requirement and were not paying attention to what was transpiring, a plan was needed to see that students were aware of what was happening at the meetings.

It was for these reasons that the writer determined to devise a meaningful and workable plan for students to observe local governmental bodies. He wanted it to be easy to implement, easily understood by the students, as convenient as possible for the governmental bodies being observed, and as little additional work for the teacher as possible.

RESEARCH

The first step employed in the research was finding out what other government teachers in the district were doing. Letters were sent to each government teacher in the district through the social studies department chairman in each high school. (Refer to Appendix A). Enclosed with each letter was a form for the teacher to fill out detailing how he handles student observation of local governmental bodies (Refer to Appendix B). They were provided with envelopes and asked to return the form through the school mail.

Of the 40 that were sent, 10 were returned. Of those, seven indicated that they used student observation of governmental bodies as a part of their government classes, and three indicated that they did not. Of the seven, four said that it was a regular part of each student's grade; one said that it was an option in fulfilling a government project; and two use it entirely as extra credit (Refer to Appendix C for further breakdown of responses). Collectively the responses indicated a dissatisfaction with present programs for these observations, although the teachers believed that there was a great deal of benefit from governmental observation.

A computer search was ordered through Nova

University's Information Retrieval Service for related literature, and out of 52 items printed, only two appeared to have a relationship to this project. These were ordered and studied. One has samples of some of the projects done in the Massachusetts schools in celebration of the 1976 bicentennial (Lydiard, Ed. and Kingsbury, 1976). Most of the projects were not related to this practicum, either because of the subject matter or the grade level of the students. The teacher did, however, get the idea of a student packet with relevant information for the observations from one project in the Springfield Public Schools that encouraged voter registration. The students were given booklets with information on voter registration. They also contained information on how to become a candidate and carry out a successful campaign. A list of the names, addresses, and phone numbers of national, state, and local officials was also included (Lydiard, Ed. and Kingsbury, 1976, p. 16).

The other outlined a very ambitious program for placing students into internship positions in the offices of city and county governments in Dade County, Florida (Dade County League of Women Voters, 1977-1978). Students had to apply for the nine-week internships that required five hours of work per week. This is, of course,

goes far beyond the scope of this practicum. It was, however, encouraging to see the cooperation that is possible between the schools and the offices of local government. Also included in this study was a plan for up to 15 students to observe local government agencies. Unless the subject school district would set aside funds in considerable amounts for such a project, it would not be workable.

Research was conducted in both the local university library and the county library. Although nothing was found that discussed a project similar to this, information was found that was used in composing the pretest-posttest (Refer to Appendix D) and the student information packet (Refer to Appendix E). A booklet published by the League of Women Voters in this area (1982) was particularly helpful.

A letter to the chairman of the County Commission brought a warm encouraging response (Refer to Appendix F). Included with the letter was a list of all the boards, committees, and commissions that operate under the County Commission and a Services and Facilities Directory published by the County Commission (1985).

The mayor's office was contacted by phone, and information was graciously given by his staff about the various city bodies that were appropriate for student

observation. Permission was also granted for pictures to be taken of the city council meeting for the slide presentation.

The writer found the people in local government most helpful, and they showed a sincere interest in assisting the students with this project. They also provided helpful suggestions for implementing the program.

A number of exciting plans were set aside when it was found that they were impractical for a project of this time span or this writer's financial capabilities. One of these was the plan to have the orientation done by means of a video tape that could be presented to the students in the classroom. The goal was to have a local news personality present a five to ten minute story on each of the more prominent bodies in the local governments. If that failed, it was hoped that perhaps the school district would undertake the project.

None of the stations was interested in the project, and because of possible liability, they would not turn over helpful footage for use in the project. The school district indicated that a project of this sort would take the better part of a year and a sizeable budget to complete.

Although it is not a part of this project, the

writer has not given up hope on having the video taped orientation presentation available for all U.S. Government teachers in the district.

Another idea that was discarded was providing rubber stamps for the officials to use to verify their signatures on the student's sheets. Since the ink pad and stamp would be both cumbersome and messy, the plan was to obtain the self-inking ones. However, the price was prohibitive, particularly since so many different officials would be signing for the students.

METHOD

The project consisted of three parts: Orientation, Observation, and Evaluation. Before the project was implemented, the students in each of this teacher's four middle-stanine government classes were given a pretest. This same test was given at the end of the project as a posttest (Refer to Appendix D).

ORIENTATION

The students were given information packets that provided information on the program they were about to begin (Refer to Appendix E). The packet was made up of three parts: (1) A thorough explanation of the program, its requirements, and its deadlines; (2) A section that provided information on the various bodies that were appropriate for observation--when and where the meetings took place; and (3) A map of the downtown section of the city, highlighting places where the meetings would be held.

The teacher discussed the requirements of the unit with the students at length and answered their questions. This was followed by the slide presentation and an extensive lecture by the teacher with the help of charts and maps. The slide presentation shows the places where the various meetings take place, the meetings in progress,

close-ups of important officials in the meetings, and items of interest in the meeting places. Although some of the slides were taken by the teacher, most were taken by a student with the costs of film and development paid by the teacher.

This writer had planned to have an audio tape narration to accompany the slides with students interviewing government officials. However, problems both with equipment and student participation because of work and school schedules required that this feature of the orientation plan be dropped. The narration was instead provided by the teacher, and questions were answered as they arose during the presentation.

OBSERVATION

Each student was required to attend at least one hour at each of the three types of meetings:

1. A city council or county commission meeting. In order to make it as easy as possible for those students with jobs or transportation problems, observation of city council meetings of three nearby towns was permitted as were meetings of the county commission acting as another body (In this county, the members of the County Commission also act as the boards for the Water District, the Sanitation District, and the University Hospital).

The students were encouraged to observe the body that has jurisdiction over the area in which they live (a large part of the metropolitan area as well as the zone for the subject school lies in the unincorporated part of the county), but if that was inconvenient, they were allowed to attend another.

Worksheets were supplied to the students to take with them to aid them in their observations. They were asked to record the names of the members of each council or commission, the items that were discussed, and what they observed. At the top, spaces were provided for an official to record the time they entered and place his initials. When the student left, he was to again present his worksheet to the official for the time of departure and the official's signature (Refer to Appendix G).

2. A trial court. The students were encouraged to observe a trial in the State District Court--the trial court in this locality for the state. It is divided into 17 departments, each with a judge and court room. Both civil and criminal trials take place in this court. Since there is also a Federal District Court located in this city, students were allowed to substitute it for the State District Court. Students were not allowed to satisfy the court requirement in either the municipal

courts or the justice courts because the writer believes that most of them have already had experience with traffic violations, either for themselves or with friends, and many of them watch People's Court on television, a program that shows small claims court.

Again, worksheets were provided with places to indicate the type of court, the names of the litigants, and their attorneys, facts about the case, what the students observed, and spaces in which to be signed in and out (Refer to Appendix H).

3. Advisory Board. The observation of any advisory board to the county or city government satisfied the third requirement. Township advisory boards for the various unincorporated areas of the county, planning commissions for both the county and the city, and the County School District Board of Trustees were recommended although there are a number of other bodies that qualified to fulfill this assignment as well. Students were allowed to substitute observation of either a preliminary hearing or an arraignment to satisfy this requirement. These take place in both the municipal courts and the justice courts. As with the requirements above, worksheets were provided on which to place pertinent information about the meeting. They followed the same format as the

first but were printed on different colored paper to help differentiate between them (Refer to Appendix I).

Students who had special problems with observation were instructed to see the teacher. Those who came forward were found to have rather superficial excuses--the student couldn't get off work or didn't have transportation. The teacher offered to call employers, but no student made that request. Transportation was arranged for those who did not have their own transportation. Alternate assignments were available if the need had arisen, but these were not mentioned since the observations themselves were preferable. None of these was used since all of the students were able to overcome their obstacles.

Spring vacation came during the observation period, and this provided students an opportunity to attend meetings during the morning hours that were otherwise prohibited by school. This also made it possible for working students to do their observations without taking time off from work.

Students were given 100 points for each of the required observations. Those who stayed longer than the required hour were given 25 points extra credit per hour, and portions of hours were pro-rated. This was to

encourage students to continue the observation beyond the hour that was required. They were limited to 50 points extra credit for each observation with a maximum of 200 extra credit points for the semester.

In order to receive the full 100 points for the one hour of observation, the student had to see that the worksheet was filled out completely and accurately. When the worksheets were handed to the teacher, they were checked, points were alloted, and notation was made that the requirement had been satisfied. The worksheets were kept in a folder, and when all had been completed, they were stapled together. The sheets were color-coded which helped both the students and the teacher know about the student's progress in fulfilling the requirements. The court sheets were on green paper, the council and commission on yellow, and the advisory board on white.

The public officials and their clerical staffs were most helpful. They seemed to genuinely welcome the students, and on several occasions made mention of their presence. Only on one occasion did students have difficulty with being signed in and out. At a city council meeting, the clerical staff other than a young man who was operating an overhead projector was occupied in such a way that it would have been disturbing to the

meeting to call on them to sign the students' forms before they left. The overhead projector operator, evidently not aware of the proceedure, refused to sign the forms. Thus, for that meeting a number of students failed to get properly signed-out. They were, of course, not penalized.

On another occasion a large number of students arrived to observe the County Commissioners meeting as the Hospital Board, only to find that the meeting had been canceled. They were given 25 points extra credit for their effort, and since this occurred toward the end of the observation period, they were offered an extension of time to fulfill that requirement.

EVALUATION

Throughout the observation period there were discussions of what the students had observed. Students shared interesting situations they had observed, asked questions of the teacher and discussed their experiences with their peers.

When the time for observations was completed, one class period was set aside for discussion and review. Students were again encouraged to share what they had observed. The following day the posttest was given. This was the same test given at the beginning of the

project as the pretest. When the students had completed the posttest, they were handed a questionaire on which to evaluate the program (Refer to Appendix J). They were asked to be strictly honest and were informed that they were not required to put their names on their papers. The tests were then scored and compared with the pretest, and the evaluation forms were analyzed.

TIME LINE

Planning for this practicum began in August of 1985. The subject was selected and planning was begun. In September the letters and questionaires noted above were sent to the government teachers in the district.

Later an order was submitted to Nova University's Information Retrieval Service for a computer search, and selections were ordered and researched. Research was also done at the local university library and the county library. Plans were fomalized, packets and worksheets created, and pictures were taken for the slide presentation. Finally the Practicum Proposal was completed and mailed.

The planning stage went slowly since the writer, in addition to his teaching duties,was enrolled in both the fall and winter cycles in Nova University classes.

On March 13, 1986 the pretest was given. The slide presentation and lecture orientation was given the

following day, and the packets and worksheets were distributed at that time. The students were informed that they had until April 21, 1986 to complete their observations. The posttest and student evaluations were completed on April 22, 1986. The information was analyzed, and the Practicum Report written.

RESULTS

The first objective in the Practicum Proposal was: "Students in all four of this teacher's U. S. Government classes will score an average of at least twenty percentage points higher on the posttest, given at the end of the implementation period, than on the pretest, administered before the plan for observation was implemented." This objective was achieved since on the average, students scored 25 percentage points higher on the posttest than on the pretest. The actual percentage of increase was even more pronounced with the scores on the posttest 74% higher than on the pretest.

The second objective in the proposal was: "Each student will achieve a score of not less than 75% on the posttest given at the end of the four week implementation period." This proved to be overly optimistic. The average score for the combined classes on the posttest was 66%. Only 26% of the students scored 75% or above. In retrospect one can find reasons for the low scores. The questions covered a wide variety of bodies while the students were only required to observe three. Although they had information conveyed both through orientation and class discussions, each student's observations covered only a limited area. Several students were

absent the day of the slide presentation and orientation. Although they received the packet of materials, they did not have the benefit of as thorough an explanation as the other students.

The final objective stated: "Each student will demonstrate that he understands what transpired during each of the meetings of local governmental bodies that he attended by correctly completing an appropriate form for each observation." This was accomplished in almost every case. There were isolated cases in which some part of the sheet was not filled-in, but these were not numerous.

The responses from the students on the evaluation questionaire were encouraging (Refer to Appendix K). Predictably a large majority prefered the court observation to the commissions or advisory boards. The fact that 63% answered that they had learned either "a great amount" or "quite a bit" while only 9% said that they had learned either "very little" or "nothing" indicates that most found the program worthwhile. In addition the positive responses about the program in later questions indicate that they consider it an enjoyable learning experience. The only question that showed a significant negative response was the one that

asked if observations should be expanded to include other facets of the local governments.

It came as no surprise that students strongly approved the extra credit provision to the observations. Not only did it allow them to improve their grades, it encouraged them to stay in meetings they found interesting.

The most common suggestion on ways to improve the program was to extend the five week time period for the observations. In some cases this was, no doubt, a serious and valid request. However, since most of the observations were done during the final week of implementation, it would seem that most were merely procrastinating, as they so often do, with this very important assignment. It is this teacher's belief that the time period was adequate.

Several parents contacted the teacher to say that they had accompanied their son or daughter to one or more of the meetings. They each said that they had found the experience to be both pleasant and informative.

In previous years, parents had asked that their son or daughter be excused from the assignment for various reasons, from work schedules to religious objections. There were no requests of that sort from any parent during this project.

On the whole, this writer is pleased with the outcome of this practicum. The fact that the students learned and enjoyed doing it is gratifying. The project was far more successful than were previous attempts at student observation, and the writer believes that it is also superior to any that was reported to him through his questionaire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This writer is excited about fine-tuning the program and using it next year and in the years to come. There is room for further development.

One of the first projects will be to expand the slide presentation to cover a wider range of the governmental bodies as well as show examples of how their decisions are carried out in the community. This will include pictures of different types of zoning, the following of a building project from raw land through the completion of a residential subdivision, and various facilities in the community under the supervision of the governing bodies.

The audio tape narration will become a reality before the unit is used next year. Plans are underway at this time to obtain the equipment and arrange the interviews.

Continued efforts will be made to create a video taped orientation program for the use of all government teachers in the school district. The school district's new social studies consultant has been contacted, and has expressed an interest in looking into it.

There will be a tightening of restrictions on signing in and out of the meetings. Some worksheets obviously showed that students had filled-in the times.

It will be stressed in next year's orientation that students will be required to have the officials fill-in both the signature and the time.

Another practice that will not be allowed is writing "refer to attached agenda" rather than noting the items on the agenda observed during the council, commission, or advisory board meetings. Students, if they receive an agenda, will be allowed to write on it and attach it to the worksheet, but that will not fulfill the requirement of taking the required material down on the worksheet.

It is with anticipation that this writer looks forward to implementing this program, revised and expanded in future years.

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Appendix A

Dear Fellow Government Teacher:

Since I tend to be a bit skeptical when I am asked to fill out a questionaire whether it is for the district, CCCTA, or another teacher, let me explain.

I am presently working on a practicum for a graduate program with NOVA University and am exploring ways to implement a meaningful program for student observation of local governmental bodies. This a practice that I think has great value, but in the past, my attempts have been much less successful than I would like. Some of you, I'm sure have had more success, and I would like to find out what you have done. I would appreciate your response even if you have never used such a program or doubt its value.

I will greatly appreciate you effort in sharing your ideas with me on the enclosed sheet and returning it to me by school mail in the attached envelope. Please feel free to use additional space if necessary. I would also like a copy of any form you use in your program.

If you are interested, I will be happy to share my findings with you when I have finished my practicum.

Thank you in advance for your help!

Sincerely,

Eldon Grauberger

Eldon Grauberger
Bonanza High School

Appendix B

GOVERNMENT TEACHER QUESTIONAIRE

1. Do you presently incorporate a program for student observation of local governmental functions as a part of your government classes?

2. If so, is it a regular part of the students' grade, or is it extra credit?

3. Is it used in more than one quarter's grade?

4. If it is a regular part of the grade, approximately what percentage of the total grade does it comprise?

5. If it is used as extra credit, do you limit the number of points that can be earned in this manner?

6. How do you work it in with your unit on local governments?

7. How do you verify the student's attendance at the meetings?

8. How do you protect against forgeries?

9. Do you make allowance for student's work schedules or religious objections? If so, how?

10. What advance preparation, if any, do you give students so that they will understand what is happening?

11. What type of follow-up, if any, is done to measure the benefits of the observation?

12. Which functions do you require that they attend?

13. Which functions are optional?

Appendix C

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM GOVERNMENT TEACHER QUESTIONAIRE

1. Yes, 7; No, 3

2. Regular, 3; Extra Credit, 2; Both 1; One option for a required project, 1. No answer, 3.

3. Yes, 4; No, 2; No Answer, 4.

4. Answers varied between 5% and 15%-20%. Two answered, that it was according to the amount of work done.

5. Yes, 2; No, 1; No Answer, 7.

6. Wide variety of answers from "I don't" to "guest speakers."

7. Some required the students to take careful notes, some required written reports, some official agendas signed by an official, and one attended the meeting with the students.

8. Answers varied from "I don't" to "follow-up phone calls to officials." One teacher discussed the meetings with each student individually.

9. Yes, 2; No, 4; No answer, 3.

10. Answers varied from lecture to "Chapter 32 of Magruders." Two indicated there was little or no preparation. Lecture was the most common.

11. Answers varied from "oral reports" to "class discussion."

12. None of the teachers required any certain meetings. They left the options open.

?

Appendix D

PRE-TEST AND POST TEST TO MEASURE STUDENT LEARNING FROM STUDENT OBSERVATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL BODIES IN ACTION.

1. The official name for the county's legislative body is: (a) Board of Governors of Clark County (b) Clark County Assembly (c) Clark County Commission (d) Clark County Board of Delegates.

2. Over what area does it have jurisdication? (a) All of Clark County equally (b) All of Clark County outside of the incorporated towns and cities (c) All of Clark County, but to a lesser extent in the incorporated towns and cities (d) Only the area of Clark County outside of both the incorporated towns and cities and the unincorporated towns.

3. How many members does the county's legislative body have? (a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 9 (d) 13 (e) 21

4. How do the members get their positions? They are: (a) appointed by the State Legislature (b) chosen by delegates from each of the cities and towns within the county (c) elected by the voters within the county (d) appointed by the County Manager.

5. What is the length of each member's term? (a) 1 year (b) 2 years (c) 4 years (d) 6 years (e) 8 years

6. When does the county's legislative body meet? (a) The first and third Tuesdays and Wednesdays of each month (b) The second and fourth Tuesdays and Thursdays of each month (c) Every Monday except holidays (d) Every Friday except holidays

7. At what time does the county's legislative body meet? (a) 9:00 a.m. (b) 10:30 a.m. (c) 1:30 p.m. (d) 7:00 p.m.

8. Where does the county's legislative body meet? (a) In the Bridger Building (b) In the Clark County Court House (c) In Las Vegas City Hall (d) In the Federal Building

9. What is the title of the body's presiding officer? (a) Clark County County Administrator (b) Chairman of the Clark County Commission (c) County Manager (d) County Supervisor (e) Clark County Council President.

10. How is the presiding officer chosen? (a) Elected by the people (b) Appointed by the Governor (c) Chosen every two years by fellow members (d) Chosen by the State Legislature.

11. Who is the presiding officer? (a) Bill Briare (b) Manny Cortez (c) Thalia Dondero (d) Ron Lurie (e) Grant Sawyer

12. What other functions does this body perform other than making county ordinances?
    (a) Oversight over all functions of County departments
    (b) Oversight over the functions of both the incorporated and unincorporated towns and cities
    (c) Control of the budgets of agencies administered by other elected officials
    (d) Both (a) and (b)
    (e) Both (a) and (c)

13. The County legislative body also acts as the:
    (a) Board of Trustees of the Clark County Sanitation District
    (b) Board of Directors of the Las Vegas Valley Water District
    (c) Board of Trustees of University Hospital
    (d) Clark County Liquor and Gaming Licensing Board
    (e) All of the above.

14. What is the name of the advisory body that makes recommendations for zoning, land subdivision, and architectural supervision?
    (a) Board of Governors (b) Board of Supervisors
    (c) Board of Building and Safety (d) Planning Commission
    Commission.

15. When does it meet?
    (a) The first and third Tuesdays and Thursdays of each month.
    (b) The first and third Wednesdays of each month.
    (c) The second and fourth Tuesdays and Thursdays of each month.
    (d) The second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

16. What time does it meet?
    (a) 9:00 a.m. (b) 10:30 a.m. (c) 1:30 p.m. (d) 7:00 p.m.

17. How many members are there?
    (a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 9 (d) 11 (e) 13

18. How do the members get their positions?
    They are: (a) elected by the people (b) chosen by the state legislature (c) chosen by the county legislative body
    (d) appointed by the Mayor.

19. The official name for the city's legislative body is:
    (a) Board of City Commissioners (b) City Council (c) City Advisory Council (d) City Planning Commission.

20. Its chairman is the:
    (a) City Administrator (b) City Commission Chairman
    (c) City Manager (d) Mayor

21. Its regular meetings take place at:
    (a) City Hall Commission Chambers (b) County Court House
    (c) Cashman Field Center (d) The Golden Nugget

22. Its regular meetings are scheduled to take place:
(a) The first and third Tuesdays of each month, (b) The second and fourth Thursdays of each month (c) The first and Third Tuesdays and Thursdays of each month (d) The first Wednesday of each month.

23. The board that hears applications for zone changes, variances, and the like and recommends action to the city's legislative body is the:
(a) City Planning Commission (b) Township Board
(c) City Preview Board (d) City Advisory council.

24. The city official who oversees the various agencies and departments of the city government is called the:
(a) City Council Chairman (b) City Manager (c) City Project Director (d) Mayor.

25. The county courts that hear criminal cases and the larger civil cases as well as appeals from the lower courts are called:
(a) Justice Courts (b) Municipal Courts (c) State District Courts (d) State Superior Courts (e) Circuit Courts of Appeal.

26. In these courts, the cases are decided by:
(a) The judge (b) The jury (c) The magistrates
(d) both a and b (e) both b and c.

27. These courts have what type(s) of jurisdiction?
(a) original (b) appelate (c) both a and b
(d) none of these.

28. How many jurors (not including alternates) are there in these courts?
(a) 7 (b) 10 (c) 12 (d) 13 (e) 16

29. The party in a court case which charges another with doing wrong or causing injury is called the:
(a) baliff (b) defendant (c) magistrate (d) plaintiff

30. The party accused of the wrong or injury is called the:
(a) baliff (b) defendant (c) magistrate (d) plaintiff

31. The court official who calls the court to order, swears-in witnesses, escorts the jury in and out of the court room, and in general, keeps order is the:
(a) baliff (b) defendent (c) magistrate (d) plaintiff

32. Cases from these courts may be appealed to the:
(a) State District Courts (b) State Superior Court
(c) Nevada Supreme Court (d) Federal District Court
(e) All of the above

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33. County courts which hear small claims and also handle some arraignments are called:
(a) District Courts (b) Circuit Courts (c) Justice Courts
(d) Municipal Courts (e) Superior Courts

34. Cases in these small claims courts are decided by the:
(a) judge (b) judicial panel (c) jury (d) magistrates

35. Cases in these small-claims courts may be appealed directly to the:
(a) Federal District Court (b) State District Court
(c) State Superior Court (d) State Supreme Court.

Appendix E

STUDENT INFORMATION FOR OBSERVING LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

Each student will be required to make three different observations of not less than one hour each according to the guidelines set out below:

1. A local government legislative body (Clark County Commission, Las Vegas City Council or the city council or commission for North Las Vegas, Henderson, or Boulder City). In situations where it would be an extreme hardship on the student, the teacher may substitute one of the planning commissions in lieu of the above, but this permission must be granted before the observation.

2. A trial court. Either the State District Courts or the Federal District Court is acceptable. Neither the municipal courts nor the justice courts will satisfy this requirement.

3. The student will have a choice of a number of different bodies to observe. Virtually any governmental board or commission will qualify. However, private or civic groups to not qualify. Some recommendatons are: Clark County School Board of Trustees, advisory boards for the various townships, Gaming Control Board, and various planning commissions. Arraignments or preliminary hearings for criminal cases in the municipal court or justice courts will also be allowed. If the student has any question about a particular body, he should ask the teacher before he observes.

When he goes to observe a governmental body, the student should make certain that he has the appropriate form and has put his name at the top. He must also put the name of the body that he is observing in the space provided. As he enters, he should hand the sheet to an official and ask him to put the time entered in the appropriate space and then place his initials in the space next to it. He should then find a seat and quietly observe the proceedings, filling out the form completely and carefully as he observes. It may be helpful to take notebook paper and a clipboard. The information can then be transfered to the form at his leisure. As the student leaves, he must see that an official signs the form in the space provided at the bottom of the sheet and also inserts the time in the space provided.

The student should make sure that the form is complete and accurate before he hands it in since the 100 points will be granted only if the observation form is completed accurately.

The student is required to stay at least one hour at each observation. He will receive extra credit if he stays longer--25 points for each hour. However, no more than 50 extra credit points may be earned at each meeting.

VARIOUS GOVERNMENTAL BODIES APPROPRIATE FOR OBSERVATION

1. CLARK COUNTY COMMISSION

The Clark County Commission is the legislative body for Clark County. It is composed of seven commissioners, each elected from a voting district within the county on a partisan basis for a term of four years. It selects its own chairman. The commission is ultimately responsible for all functions of the County departments and controls the budgets of agencies administered by by other elected officials.

This body has jurisdiction in all parts of the county, but to a far greater degree in the areas outside the city limits of the incorporated towns and cities where the power is divided between the county and the town or city.

The Commission's regular meetings are held on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 9 am to handle administrative business and the first and third Wednesdays of the month for zoning matters. The student may find it difficult because of his school schedule to attend these meetings. However, this same body meets in the afternoons in other capacities. These include:

A. BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CLARK COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT
Meets at 1:30 pm on the first and third Tuesdays of each month.

B. UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL BOARD OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
Meets at 2 pm on the first and third Tuesdays of each month.

C. BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LAS VEGAS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT
Meets at 3 pm on the first and third Tuesdays of each month.

D. LIQUOR AND GAMING LICENSING BOARD
Meets at 9 am on the last working day of the month.

Each of these meetings is held in the Commission Chambers of the Bridger Building, 225 Bridger Avenue,(See map) and since the Clark County Commissioners make up the membership of each, they can satisfy the requirement for observing a commission or council meeting.

2. CLARK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Clark County Planning Commission is a seven member body whose members are chosen by the Clark County Commission. It hears applications for zone changes, subdivision plans, and variances and makes recommendations to the Clark County Commission. It meets four times each month, on the first and third Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7 pm in the Commission Chambers in the Bridger Building, 225 Bridger Avenue. (See map) Observing this body will satisfy the third requirement, and in certain instances, when because of problems of work schedules, the teacher may approve such an observation to satisfy the requirement to observe a council or commission provided that the third requirement is satisfied at a different kind of meeting.

3. LAS VEGAS CITY COUNCIL

The Las Vegas City Council is the legislative body of the City of Las Vegas. It is composed of four councilmen each elected from a different ward which together encompass all areas within the city limits. The Mayor, who is elected at large, is the presiding officer of the City Council.

Like the County Commission, the City Council is ultimately responsible for all functions of the City's departments and controls their budgets. Its authority is outlined in the city charter, created by the state legislature.

The day to day managment of the various departments of the city is in the hands of the City Manager who is hired by the Las Vegas City Council and serves at their pleasure.

The Council meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 9:45 am, but its business normally carries over into the afternoon with the afternoon session beginning at 2 pm. The meetings are held in the City Hall Council Chambers (see the map). For students who live within the Las Vegas city limits, this is the recommended observation to satisfy the requirement for a council or commission meeting.

4. CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

The City of Las Vegas Planning Commission is a seven member body which like its counterpart in the County makes recommendations for zoning changes, variances, and subdivision plans. Its members are chosen by the City Council. Its regular meetings are on the second Thursday and the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm. Since the meeting times are sometimes changed, it is advisable to call the afternoon before the meeting to make certain that it is still scheduled. The meetings take place in the commission chambers of the City Hall (see map). Observation of this body satisfies the third observation requirement.

5. TOWNSHIP ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS

Several areas of the county outside of the incorporated towns and cities are organized as unincorporated towns. They do not have final say on matter concerning their residents. The can, however, through their advisory boards, make recommendations to the Clark County Commission and other boards which operate under the Clark County Commission. Their meeting times and places vary. The student should call the Clark County Commission to get a schedule of these meetings. They are sometimes listed in the "THIS WEEK" column of the Sunday REVIEW JOURNAL. The observation of any of these boards will satisfy the third observation requirement.

6. STATE DISTRICT COURT

The seventeen departments of the District Court of Nevada's Eighth Judicial District hold court in the Clark County Court House located at Third and Carson (see map). These are the trial courts for the State of Nevada and have original jurisdiction in in all criminal cases in Clark County as well as civil cases in which the amount is controversy exceeds one thousand dollars. They have appelate jurisdiction in cases appealed from both the municipal courts and the justice courts in Clark County.

These courts are in session weekdays from about 9 am to 5 pm. They satisfy the court observation requirement.

7. FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT

The Federal District Court hears cases of persons accused of breaking federal laws and civil cases in which the United States government is a party. The are the only trial courts in the federal court system and have original jurisdiction in almost all federal cases. This court meets in the Foley Federal Building located at 200 Las Vegas Blvd. South (see map). Admittance is sometimes restricted, with observers being allowed to enter only during court recesses. For this reason, unless there is a case the student particularly wants to observe, it is easier to do the court observation in the State District Court noted above.

8. ARRAIGNMENTS OR PRELIMINARY HEARINGS

The third observation may also be satisfied by attending either an arraignment or a preliminary hearing. An arraignment is a court hearing in which an accused person is informed of the charges against him. In the preliminary hearing, a judge hears evidence presented by the prosecution and decides if it is sufficient to hold the accused person for trial. Both of these hearings are done in both the Municipal Court--located in City Hall (see the map) and the Justice courts--located in the First Interstate Bank Building (see map). When it is found that there is sufficient evidence to hold an accused persón for trial, he will be tried in the State District Court noted above.

Arraignments and preliminary hearings are the only activities by the municipal courts and the justice courts that are suitable for satisfying an observation requirement.

9. POLITICAL RALLIES OR GATHERINGS

The teacher may allow the observation of a political rally or gathering to satisfy the third observation requirement in some cases. A student who is interested in attending such a meeting must notify the teacher in advance, inform him about the meeting, and get his approval. If it does not qualify to satisy the third observation requirement, it may qualify for extra credit as part of the 200 extra credit points allowed during the semester.

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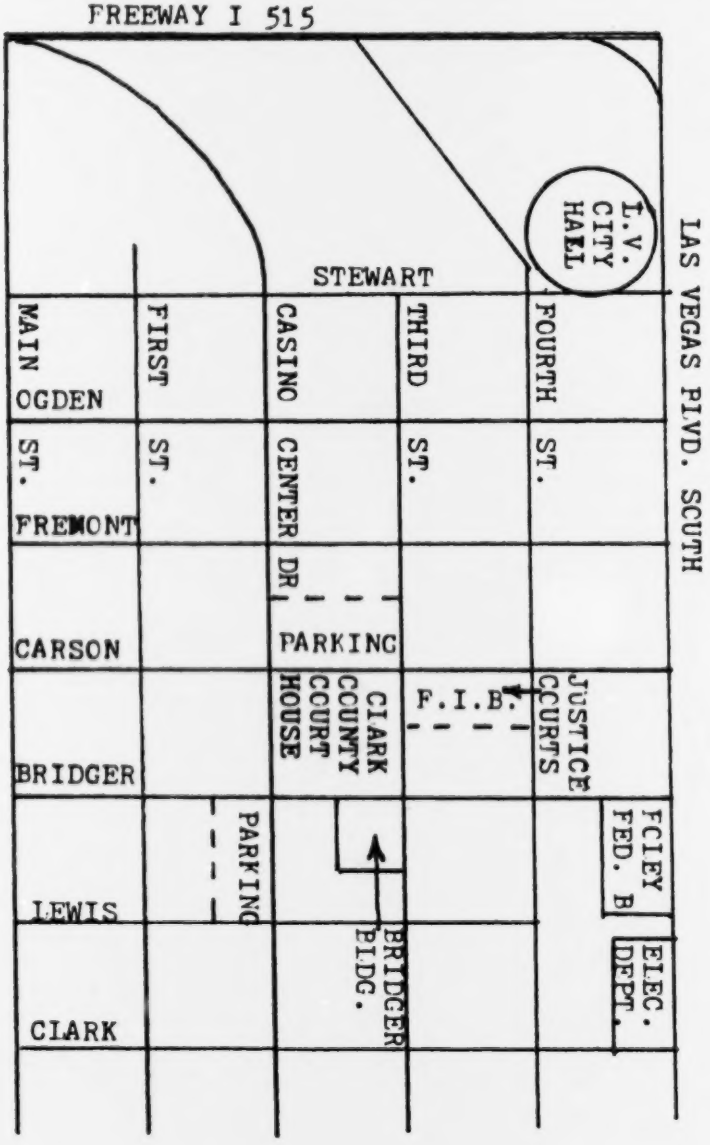
The student should go to these meetings with the idea of learning about his government and enjoying the experience. The more closely he pays attention, the more he will learn, and the more he will enjoy the observation. People live under local governments all through their lives. By learning how they operate, one can find how to function with them for not only his own best interest, but also that of his community.



Appendix F

THALIA M. DONDERO
CHAIRMAN

Board of County Commissioners
CLARK COUNTY BRIDGER BUILDING
225 BRIDGER AVENUE
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89155
(702) 383-3500

September 24, 1985

Mr. Eldon Graubergh
Bonanza High School
6665 Del Rey
Las Vegas NV 89102

Dear Mr. Graubergh:

I commend the excellent choice you made for your graduate practicum. A student's understanding of local government is an important asset in developing a sense of community participation.

The Board of County Commissioners meets regularly on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. The members of the Board will autograph the agenda that is made available on the meeting dates.

On the same days as the Board's morning sessions, the County Commissioners meet in the afternoon as the Board of Trustees of the Sanitation District, the Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital and the Las Vegas Valley Water District. In addition, the Clark County Planning Commission and the various Town Boards regularly schedule evening meetings.

I have enclosed a list of the boards, commissions, committees and agencies associated with the County Board of Commissioners. The meetings of these organizations may be of interest and benefit to your local government class. I have included the Clark County Services and Facilities Directory that I believe may also be helpful.

I am most interested in promoting the awareness of local government and would be delighted to have an opportunity to speak to your class.

I wish you every success in completing your graduate studies.

Sincerely,

Thalia M. Dondero

THALIA M. DONDERO
Chairman

/js
Enclosures

Appendix G

STUDENT'S OBSERVATION OF GOVERNMENTAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

STUDENT'S NAME_____

NAME OF GOVERNMENTAL BODY_____

DATE_____ TIME ENTERED_____ Official's Initials_____

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. CHRMN_____ 6._____

2._____ 7._____

3._____ 8._____

4._____ 9._____

5._____ 10._____

ITEMS OF BUSINESS	OUTCOME
1._____	_____
2._____	_____
3._____	_____
4._____	_____
5._____	_____
6._____	_____
7._____	_____
8._____	_____
9._____	_____
10._____	_____

DEPARTURE TIME_____ Official's Signature_____

NOTES (Interesting or noteworthy things that you observed)

_____

_____

_____

Appendix H

STUDENT'S OBSERVATION OF COURT TRIAL

STUDENT'S NAME_____

DATE_____ TIME ENTERED_____ Official's Initials_____

TYPE:____State District Court,___Justice Court,___Municipal Court

____State Supreme Court,____Federal District Court

JUDGE'S NAME_____Court #_____

TYPE OF TRIAL:_____CIVIL _____CRIMINAL

LITIGANTS: PLAINTIFF_____ DEFENDENT_____

ATTORNEYS: Plaintiff's_____ Defendent's_____

FACTS ABOUT THE CASE

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU OBSERVED

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DEPARTURE TIME_____ Official's Signature_____

Appendix I

STUDENT'S OBSERVATION OF GOVERNMENTAL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

STUDENT'S NAME_____

NAME OF GOVERNMENTAL BODY_____

DATE_____ TIME ENTERED_____ Official's Initials_____

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. CHRMN_____ 6._____

2._____ 7._____

3._____ 8_____

4._____ 9._____

5._____ 10._____

ITEMS OF BUSINESS	OUTCOME
1._____	_____
2._____	_____
3._____	_____
4._____	_____
5._____	_____
6._____	_____
7._____	_____
8._____	_____
9._____	_____
10._____	_____

DEPARTURE TIME_____ Official's Signature_____

NOTES (Interesting or noteworthy things that you observed)

_____

_____

_____

Appendix J

EVALUATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL OBSERVATION PROGRAM

You are not required to put your name on this sheet. This is to express your opinions about the observation program. Please answer honestly.

1. Which of the three observations did you enjoy the most?

   (Circle one) Court Commission or Council Advisory Board

   Why?_____

   _____

2. Which of the three did you enjoy the least?

   (Circle one) Court Commission or Council Advisory Board

   Why?_____

   _____

3. How much do you think you learned from the observations? (Circle one)

   A great amount quite a bit some very little nothing

4. Do you think that you understand local governments better as a result of this observation program? (Yes No)

5. Did the orientation (slides, lecture, and packet) provide sufficient preparation for the observations? (Yes No) Explain_____

   _____

6. Were officials and their staffs courteous and helpful? (Yes No) Please

   cite examples_____

   _____

7. Was the offering of extra credit for extra observation a good idea?(Yes No)

8. Should this program be expanded to include activities other than courts, commissions, councils, boards, etc.? (Yes No) If so, what?_____

   _____

9. Would you recommend this program for future years?(Yes No) Why or why not?

   _____

10. How could this program be improved?_____

    _____

Appendix K

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES ON STUDENT EVALUATION QUESTIONAIRE FOR OBSERVATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

Number of students surveyed.....98

	Number	% of Total
1.		
Court	80	82%
Commission or Council	14	14%
Advisory Board	4	4%
No Response	0	0%
2.		
Court	6	6%
Commission or Council	58	59%
Advisory Board	30	31%
No Response	4	4%
3.		
Great Amount	11	11%
Quite a Bit	51	52%
Some	26	27%
Very Little	6	6%
Nothing	3	3%
No Response	1	1%
4.		
Yes	85	87%
No	12	12%
No Response	1	1%
5.		
Yes	77	79%
No	15	15%
No Response	6	6%
6.		
Yes	82	84%
No	10	10%
No Response	6	6%
7.		
Yes	96	98%
No	2	2%
No Response	0	0%
8.		
Yes	26	27%
No	70	71%
No Response	2	2%
9.		
Yes	83	85%
No	12	12%
No Response	3	3%